

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13PA5

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mrs. Donna Drizin

Official School Name: Whitemarsh Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 4120 Joshua Road
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444-1213

County: Montgomery State School Code Number*: 3411

Telephone: (610) 828-9092 E-mail: ddrizin@colonialsd.org

Fax: (610) 828-1516 Web site/URL: http://hub.colonialsd.org/ourschools/WE/Pages/default.aspx

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer Superintendent e-mail:
mgorodetzer@colonialsd.org

District Name: Colonial District Phone: (610) 834-1670

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Alan Tabachnick

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
7 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 13942

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	51	45	96
1	28	37	65
2	57	39	96
3	53	30	83
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			340

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
7 % Asian
3 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
83 % White
3 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 4%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	5
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	14
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	356
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.04
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	4

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 2%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 7
Number of non-English languages represented: 3
Specify non-English languages:

Polish, Chinese, Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12%

Total number of students who qualify: 39

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 16%

Total number of students served: 55

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>
Total number	<u>39</u>	<u>19</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

19:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____%

Enrolled in a community college _____%

Enrolled in vocational training _____%

Found employment _____%

Military service _____%

Other _____%

Total _____**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

Whitemarsh Elementary is a dynamic Kindergarten through third grade building in Montgomery County, a suburb of Philadelphia. It is a sector of the Colonial School District, serving over 4,700 students. We provide high quality curricular and instructional programs to a diverse population. Our school population consists of 16% non-Caucasian students, primarily of Asian descent. Additionally, 16% of our student body receives Special Education Services throughout the school day, totaling 53 students. Furthermore, 12% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch due to economic hardships. We have full day kindergarten, inclusive education, modified learning and life skills support. Students and staff focus on rigor, relevance, and 21st Century Skills. For over 55 years, our school has been closely tied to the community. Whitemarsh Township consists of an estimated 6,500 households. 23.5% of the individuals residing here are school age. We proudly create a special place celebrating differences and honoring traditions, while supporting our community. Our strong traditions coupled with a distinct educational mission unequivocally qualify Whitemarsh Elementary for National Blue Ribbon status.

From the moment you pull into our driveway, you can't help but smile as you read our sign: "Welcome to Someplace Special". Upon entering the building you immediately notice the diverse community of learners actively engaged in cutting edge, relevant and rigorous curriculum. The hallways and classrooms are filled with lively peer and teacher conversations, wheelchair motors, and proud faces. Co-teaching occurs through a comprehensive inclusive model among staff and teachers including: Regular Education, English Language Learner (ELL), Reading Specialists, Special Education, Gifted, Speech, Occupational Therapist (OT), and Physical Therapist (PT), which allow all students to thrive in the least restrictive environment. Through student, teacher and parent partnerships, our diverse student population fits seamlessly together.

Whitemarsh Elementary School's mission parallels that of the Colonial School District. We uphold the district's vision as we actively engage all students in rich, integrated learning experiences. We promote a culture of "collaboration, innovation and inspiration." Our teachers are empowered to implement 21st Century skills which provide an education in a personalized learning environment with high expectations for all students. Instruction is grounded with the best research-based learning theories to create our educational framework. This allows us to present authentic learning experiences to inspire the development of lifelong learners.

Whitemarsh Elementary is grounded in traditions and milestones beyond the walls of our school, extending into the community at large. Our customs foster a safe learning community that creates partnerships between staff, students, families, and community members. These activities connect to the curriculum in meaningful ways while increasing students' values, self-respect, empathy for others, as well as boosting academic performance. Service learning projects are an integral part of our identity, which instill respect and kindness through humanitarian efforts, volunteerism, and building camaraderie among students. We achieve this by: honoring Veterans and families, Spaghetti Dinner, Smile Mile (promoting healthy lifestyles), Third Grade Sleepover, Third Grade Student Council, Carnival, Barnes & Noble Night, planting trees for Arbor Day, monthly birthday lunch celebrations, Kindergarten Parent Boo-Hoo Breakfast, Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms, Grandparents Day, Pet Therapy, Volunteer Breakfast, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), parent/child lunch, Bingo, Kindergarten Thanksgiving Feast, Thanksgiving food baskets, Colonial Neighborhood Council holiday gift donations, supporting the troops (letter writing and care packages), honoring local community heroes (911 ceremony), parent curriculum workshops, Recycle Rally, Cradles to Crayons (donations from children to children), Pennies for Patients, Read for Ronald, and SPCA. This plethora of events unifies us as one.

Our Whitemarsh family of teachers shows their strengths and accomplishments by serving as leaders in the building and throughout the district. Teachers have earned and been recognized for: 3E-Educator 500

Awards (teachers who incorporate best practices into school programs), Voices of Inspiration Award (exhibiting the qualities that represent a truly inspirational educator), Master Teacher (teachers who serve as district leaders), Best Practice Fair Presenters (teachers training teachers). Professional Learning Communities meet weekly to analyze data, to differentiate tasks, and to continuously learn from and reflect on teaching practices. Additionally, teachers and parents participate in the Student Support Team (SST) to support struggling students. The School Improvement Team (SIT) brings cohesiveness throughout our school, aligning with the district's vision. The objective of our school improvement plan is to ensure student achievement and engagement.

The National Blue Ribbon Award honors schools that are producing outstanding and consistent results for all students regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Whitemarsh consistently yields superior results across all sub-groups. Over the years, Whitemarsh students have demonstrated sustained excellence in the areas of both mathematics and reading on the Pennsylvania System of Schools Assessment (PSSA). This past school year, 99% of our 3rd grade students scored Proficient or Advanced in Mathematics and 98% scored Proficient or Advanced in Reading. We are confident that this trend of success will continue.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A. At the start of each year, the staff at Whitmarsh Elementary School works in collaboration with the Curriculum Department to identify, analyze and reflect on district and school based data collected over the previous 3-5 years. An individual student data profile is developed for every child. The profile includes a baseline of each student's performance level with reference to state expectations and developmental norms. Results from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) provide student performance levels on standards in Reading and Mathematics. Whitmarsh Elementary School made Adequate Yearly Progress in both Math and Reading 2012. The state's targeted expectation in the area of Reading was 81% proficient. Whitmarsh exceeded this expectation by 17% with 98% of our students receiving a proficient or above score. In the area of Mathematics the state's targeted expectation was 78%; however we surpassed that by 21% with a 99% proficiency rate.

District Benchmark Assessments as well as 4-Sight assessments provide diagnostic information on PA standards and sub-skills in Reading and Mathematics. Student achievement results from these measures are used for predicting Pennsylvania System of School Assessment outcomes. Student levels of performance are considered acceptable when students demonstrate overall positive trends in achievement over time. Success is measured in terms of student growth, individually and in aggregate, against the same group and across different cohorts. At a minimum, students are expected to achieve proficiency on state level assessments and to show a year's growth in performance on all other measures. All students are considered proficient when they demonstrate a solid understanding of grade-level standards-based curriculum learning targets and are able to apply what they have learned across different contexts.

B. The five year trend reveals exceptionally high levels of performance for students scoring at or above the proficient level on the grade 3 PSSA. The percent of students scoring at or above Proficient in Reading and Mathematics ranges from 95% to 100% over the past 5 years. In 2012, 95% of our students scored Advanced in Mathematics and nearly two-thirds scored Advanced in Reading. Most notable is the high performance level achieved by students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP). In 2011, 100% of students who have IEPs scored proficient or above in Reading and 96% in Mathematics.

Steady growth was seen by all students in reading and math over a five year span from 2008 to 2012. In the area of math, the entire student population scored proficient or above, an increase of 2%. Our highlight is that over five years we were able to increase our advanced students by 14% in math. Similarly, students scoring proficient or above in reading increased by 3% and those scoring advanced increased by 12%. All of our student subgroups have shown overall growth during this five year span; however, our most noteworthy accomplishments are evidenced by the results seen in the subgroup of free and reduced lunch. In mathematics, the number of students scoring advanced increased from 63% in 2008 to 100% in 2012. This is an improvement rate of 37% in math. In reading, we demonstrated an increase from 88% proficient in 2008 to 100% in 2012 with a 12% growth.

Consistent high levels of student performance can be attributed to a genuine staff commitment to analyze data. Annual school improvement goals, focusing on data and student needs are collaboratively developed and implemented throughout the year. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments are used to monitor and ensure student learning is rigorous, relevant and appropriate for all. Parent and community outreach committees and demographic data are used to determine which programs and supportive services are valued and effective. Members of the staff work collaboratively with colleagues and families to ensure our students' academic, physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Professional development is closely linked to the broader context of school improvement and is crucial for student achievement. Our program is research-based, collaborative, job-embedded and focused on the

whole child. Coverage schedules, common planning and team time, as well as structured professional development through professional learning communities (PLC), permit teachers to work collaboratively and utilize standardized and authentic data to make informed instructional decisions within the school day. This time is spent differentiating lessons, developing quality questions, building classroom discourse structures and establishing innovative pedagogy. Across the district, teachers' and school leaders' actions reinforce a positive vision for teaching, learning, and high expectations.

Another important aspect of student success is Colonial's clear and coherent curricular and assessment design aligned to high standards. Grade level benchmarks and a trajectory of skill development are well defined and articulated across all content areas. Curriculum units are written with the goal of tapping the students' natural curiosity, engaging students in relevant issues, and exploring concepts in depth. Essential questions are established to develop student knowledge of recurring social themes and a variety of cultural perspectives, promoting democratic values and engaging students in civic affairs.

We utilize research-based strategies to maximize student growth and achievement. Our dedication and commitment is evident in our safe learning environment, active student engagement, and personalized learning supported by highly qualified, caring adults. Cumulatively, this has yielded improved student performance across all groups.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Colonial School District has an unwavering commitment to using a broad range of assessment data to make informed decisions based on those results. Annual school improvement planning and systemic professional development provides a comprehensive system for analyzing results, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and creating and implementing strategies for improving student learning. Assessment results are analyzed comparatively across the state, county and district as well as at the individual student level. In addition to monitoring attainment of the standards and informing instruction, assessment data is used to evaluate and modify the district's curriculum and instructional programs.

At Whitmarsh Elementary, assessment is viewed as a continuous, dynamic process that involves examining and observing children's behaviors, listening to their ideas, and developing questions to promote conceptual understanding. Staff uses large-scale assessments for the purposes of accountability, school improvement planning and targeting specific standards on which to improve. In addition to standardized tests, authentic assessments are used regularly to examine student performance and understanding on significant tasks which have relevancy to the student's life in and out of the classroom. These assessments are an integral part of the instructional process and are crucial in helping students learn. Assessment results are analyzed and then followed by high-quality, corrective instruction designed to remedy gaps in learning.

Teachers use district benchmark data to identify students who are not showing growth or achieving proficiency according to state standards. Teachers plan and provide extensive and differentiated learning opportunities before, during and after school to remediate instruction and to support struggling learners in the areas of Math and Literacy. Students demonstrating difficulty meeting standards receive additional support during the school day, through co-teaching, tutoring and mentoring from their peers as well as from middle and high school students, parent and grandparent volunteers. Additionally, teachers plan targeted lessons using an Early Literacy Intervention Model and cross-class flexible grouping. Student growth and levels of performance across all content areas are continuously reviewed and monitored throughout the year.

The Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) by Fountas and Pinnell is used to establish student developmental reading levels. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is also used by classroom teachers and reading specialists to regularly monitor students' development of phonemic awareness and early reading skills. Students who fall below our district's expected reading proficiency level receive strategic small group instruction from a Reading Specialist to work towards

closing the achievement gap. Additionally, before and after school programs are offered to provide additional support that cannot be given during the school day. Students are assessed before and after participating in the program to measure progress. Formative assessments and progress monitoring are frequent and used to adjust and differentiate learning based on individual student needs. Elementary summer literacy programs are also offered to students who are not reading at the appropriate instructional level.

Using a wide range of data sources helps teachers develop interventions that are timely and specific to students' needs. Assessment results help determine which instructional strategies are effective and which need to be modified. The establishment of protocols for effectively using data to guide instruction and programming, coupled with dedicated time to collaboratively plan, allows us to respond in real time to student needs and to sustain high levels of performance over time.

Whitemarsh teachers, administrators and staff provide ongoing communication with parents through phone conversations, conferences, report cards, progress reports and emails. We offer ongoing opportunities for parents to learn about instruction, programming, and ways to help children become successful beyond the classroom. Family literacy and math “make it, take it” workshops are held to provide multiple opportunities to further bridge the home school connection. Strategies are modeled for parents in both reading and math to assist their children at home. Upon leaving, parents have a collection of tiered question cards so they can develop higher level thinking and discourse at home in reading and math. Additionally, visual strategies and games are modeled and given to parents to build consistency and reinforce skills taught at home. Various opportunities are provided to support home practice with our schools web-based reading and math enrichment programs such as myON and First In Math. This parent partnership enhances curriculum strategies taught in school.

Colonial School District’s school report card and assessment results are clearly and effectively communicated to all district stakeholders through a variety of venues such as the school website, parent council, and board and committee meetings. This communication helps parents and community members understand the various components of the assessment results and how Whitemarsh is achieving and meeting state expectations.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Whitemarsh teachers provide differentiated, district-wide staff development. This affords us multiple opportunities to share our expertise. Specially designed sessions such as formative and summative assessment, differentiated classroom instruction, and 21st Century teaching and learning have allowed for cross-building articulation and alignment of best practices. Whitemarsh teachers are highlighted on popular CITV weekly segments of “*Teachable Moments*.” District administrators and teachers observed the technology teacher with students constructing *Lego Robotics*. As a result of these observations, all elementary schools implement *Lego Robotics* as part of their technology curriculum. We boast a *National Orff certified* music specialist who utilizes her expertise in the Orff process to lead staff development and enhance music instruction. The Whitemarsh Library Media Specialist provides technology instruction to district librarians and teachers who in turn create resource lists using Destiny. Whitemarsh Master Teachers serve as an integral part of the new teacher induction program. They are facilitators and mentors to new teachers district wide and have developed staff training for differentiation, lesson planning and curriculum initiatives. Elementary professionals from across the district benefit from the training provided by Whitemarsh teachers to further enhance student programs.

Whitemarsh teachers design and offer staff development sessions on strategies proven to be successful with diverse populations of students at the District’s biannual Best Practices Fair. Teachers from across the district attend these sessions to deepen their understanding, and expand their use of research-based instructional approaches. Specific areas of knowledge and skills shared by Whitemarsh teachers include: using energizers for students to feel refreshed and ready to learn, engaging approaches for word study, and supporting students with learning disabilities. Through grade-level Professional Learning

Communities and building-based focus groups, Whitemarsh teachers cultivate teams of teachers within that are willing and able to share their expertise with their colleagues in other buildings.

In 2011, Colonial School District was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Staff Development Council (PSDC) for an innovative and exemplary professional development opportunity that was responsive to student achievement data. Whitemarsh teachers participated in this program of study to expand their classroom differentiation of Mathematical problem solving. Teachers learned new approaches to problem solving that foster student exploration and creativity, along with ways to scaffold complex problems for varied depths of understanding, complexity and engagement. These teachers were instrumental in sharing this learning with their colleagues within and outside of their building.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Whitemarsh Elementary School is committed to sustained partnerships with school families and community members to ensure student success. Our overarching goals are to nurture balanced, healthy, and productive relationships with parents, promote understanding of different cultures, build upon positive relationships, and develop tools for ongoing communication between home and school. Whitemarsh Elementary embraces the district parent involvement policy which delineates ongoing communication with parents. Consistent, meaningful home-school interactions involve both academic learning and other school-related activities which are linked to student achievement.

The Whitemarsh Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and Parent Council work collaboratively with school personnel to actively engage all parents in their child's education. Strategies to cultivate productive, instructionally focused relationships include parent/classroom writing partnerships, Career Day (parents and community guests), and parent workshops targeting technology, reading, writing and Math. The curriculum comes to life for parents through *Reading Adventures*, an interactive reading show hosted by the Whitemarsh Special Education Teacher on CITV, Art Gallery night, Philadelphia Day, and through an annual Community Preschool and Kindergarten outreach. In order to promote an understanding of different cultures, Whitemarsh is proud of its Respect the Difference initiative which promotes a peaceful school environment, translation services, multicultural awareness, ESL integration, and parent presenters to share cultural heritage.

Parents are always welcome at Whitemarsh Elementary and are given numerous opportunities to volunteer their time and talents throughout the year. Additionally, ongoing communication between home and school is initiated in various ways. Venues include: open house, report card conferences, parent calendars and informational brochures, district and school websites, weekly and monthly newsletters, E-Friday folders, positive phone calls and emails to families expressing an academic or social observation made by the principal and/or teacher. The PTO sponsors annual community events such as the Spaghetti Dinner, Bingo Night, Carnival, and Book Fair Night. Whitemarsh staff and families have a very special partnership. This is exemplified by their joint participation in the Broad Street Run and Relay for Life in support of the American Cancer Society.

Whitemarsh Elementary staff is sensitive to parent and community input and seeks to actively listen to questions, concerns, and suggestions for continuous improvement. Forums such as online surveys, checklists, and parent lunch buddies are used to gather data and determine continuous action plans. Staff is committed to actualize the Colonial School District goals to enhance and expand communication with parents and community members.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

At the Colonial School District (CSD), a core curriculum map delineates a progression of skills, processes and content students are expected to learn across all subjects. The whole child's academic, emotional, physical, and mental development is thoughtfully considered in content and skill development.

Contemporary themes such as global awareness and financial/economic, health, and environmental literacies are emphasized. Project-based units of study and essential questions are used to encourage students to think critically and work creatively and collaboratively.

The elementary Language Arts curriculum encourages students to read and examine a myriad of authentic texts and literature to stimulate their personal interest and make connections to the world around them. It is based on current research for literacy development and reflects advances in our understanding of teaching and the impact of new technologies on literacy. Curriculum is specifically designed using a Balanced Literacy model.

The elementary Mathematics curriculum provides opportunities for student inquiry and application. It encourages the exploration of a wide variety of mathematical ideas in such a way that children retain their enjoyment of, and curiosity about, mathematics. Students construct sound understandings which serve as a foundation for learning more abstract mathematics and develop the ability to reason and communicate mathematically. Inquiry-based instructional materials incorporate problem solving in a variety of contexts, while reflecting the importance of mathematical literacy in an increasingly technological society.

With a unifying theme of diversity, our elementary Social Studies curriculum emphasizes differentiated instruction and meeting the needs of all students, including special attention to English language learners, children with learning disabilities, and gifted students. Students study and examine the socially transmitted beliefs, values, institutions, behaviors, traditions, and ways of life among different people. Students learn about cultural attributes and products, such as language, literature, music, arts and artifacts, and foods. They understand human cultures exhibit both similarities and differences and learn to see themselves both as individuals and as members of a similar, but distinctive culture. Project-based units help students build content knowledge; develop civic competency and other 21st Century skills. Students acquire knowledge and understanding of culture through multiple modes, including fiction and non-fiction, data analysis, and meeting and conversing with students of divergent backgrounds.

The Science curriculum helps students gain experience with natural and social phenomena and enjoy science. From their first day of school, students learn to view the world scientifically, are encouraged to ask questions and to seek answers about nature through collecting, counting, measuring, and making qualitative observations. An inquiry-based approach helps students construct an understanding of science concepts through their own investigations and analysis, using laboratory equipment and interactive technology. Students develop skills through readings, science journals, student projects, and the use of mathematics to quantify and communicate results of investigations and experiments.

Students receive activity-based instruction in the specialist areas of art, music, physical education, library science, technology, and guidance. The Arts curriculum cultivates an aesthetic sensibility within our students and is designed to foster their ability to express and generate meaning and insight from artwork and performance. Students experience music representing diverse ethnicities, races, religions and cultures from a repertoire of different styles and time periods, both historical and contemporary. In physical education, there is a strong emphasis on personal health and fitness, team building, cooperation and the human body. Specialist programs teach core principles and skills in a meaningful way. Through these

areas, students expand their ability to communicate, think creatively, empathize with others and work as part of a team.

2. Reading/English:

The Reading curriculum, instruction, and teaching methods at Whitemarsh reflect a comprehensive approach to literacy using a balanced framework. This incorporates modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading and writing using a variety of print and electronic text. Colonial implements a Balanced Literacy model to encourage collaboration and critical thinking; ensuring students are prepared to meet the literacy challenges of the 21st Century. This research-based model provides opportunities for teachers to guide, remediate and challenge students as they progress towards becoming successful, self-regulated readers. Balanced Literacy facilitates strategic discourse so interactions between children and teachers provide opportunities for formative assessment and differentiated learning.

In each component of Balanced Literacy, teachers observe children's responses and draw their attention to examples that model expected skills and strategies. These components, when implemented in unison, create a comprehensive literacy program. Flexible elements in the Balanced Literacy framework are meant to provide opportunities to work with words and analyze text. Teachers use a gradual release model to ensure students take increased responsibility for their learning and have opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. Opportunities abound for students to apply literacy strategies in context of meaningful tasks for real world purposes. Most important is the quality and effectiveness of interactions between children and teachers and between children and their peers. It is not the components themselves but the teaching decisions within them that lead to new understandings.

The Language Arts curriculum is articulated across grades and aligned with assessment and resources for optimal implementation. Curriculum is carefully monitored and revised as needed to ensure students receive foundational reading skills in word recognition, comprehension instruction, and communication skills in writing and discourse.

Whitemarsh Elementary is committed to meeting the diverse academic needs of all students by strategically differentiating instruction to increase students' mastery of essential content and skills. Teachers use classroom data to respond to students' learning needs, in real time, including small group and in-class interventions by reading specialists as well as before and after school help. Similarly, high achieving students are afforded opportunities that challenge them, including literature circles, discourse structures, and extensive print and digital resources.

Professional learning time is allotted, giving grade-level teachers opportunities to analyze data, reflect on and discuss best practices and make collaborative instructional decisions. Whitemarsh teachers are constantly striving to be innovative and reflective in their successful implementation of Balanced Literacy.

3. Mathematics:

The standards-based Mathematics curriculum reflects the importance of mathematical literacy in an increasingly technological society. Toward this end, students are provided multiple opportunities to apply Mathematics in meaningful ways as part of the learning process. The curriculum is designed to promote a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts through exploration, investigation, critical thinking and problem solving. Through classroom experiences that draw from both the real-world and mathematical contexts, students develop reasoning, judgment and decision making skills by using a variety of strategies.

Students are encouraged to solve problems that require them to work cooperatively and to use technology to explore and address relevant and interesting mathematical ideas. Whitemarsh Elementary teachers

consistently employ cooperative learning strategies and structures to ensure common goals, individual accountability, shared responsibility, and equal engagement. Multiple opportunities are provided for students to communicate mathematically -- "talk mathematics" and write about mathematics using rich math vocabulary to explain and clarify their own thinking. Through effective questioning techniques, Whitemarsh teachers promote rich discourse within their teaching and among their students as they learn mathematics.

Formative assessment and differentiation are at the heart of mathematics instruction at Whitemarsh. Teachers consistently use data to address the unique mathematical needs of their students through appropriate differentiated support, while providing a common foundation of challenging mathematics. Additional resources and supports such as increased learning time, flexible/small group instruction, peer mentoring and extension or enrichment tasks are made available to students in order to maximize the growth and potential for all.

Whitemarsh teachers work together to not only ensure that students are taught the curriculum, but more importantly, that they are learning. A kinesthetic approach provides additional support for students identified as needing specially designed instruction to master grade level skills. A little healthy competition between grade levels (Math Fact Challenge) is used to motivate students. To further support this initiative, a web based program, First in Math is provided to third graders for home and school practice. Student learning is measured using data that includes benchmark assessments, unit assessments, quick checks, projects, student work, progress monitoring, teacher observation, anecdotal records, and exit slips. Grade level teams meet regularly to analyze this data and collaboratively plan for remediation, enrichment, and interventions. These teams continuously seek authentic ways to improve student success and evaluate their own effectiveness as part of the teaching and learning process.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

In today's ever changing society, 21st Century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration are essential. Throughout the curriculum, students use a wide range of strategies to create and implement new ideas, as well as reason and solve problems. Students develop the ability to clearly articulate their thoughts and ideas, while working effectively and respectfully in diverse teams. At Whitemarsh Elementary, students extend this skill development beyond the core content areas into the Arts. All Art and Music teachers have received staff development on how to integrate vocabulary, knowledge, skills, perspectives, and experiences within and across subject areas to develop a more powerful understanding of key ideas. Components of the curriculum are integrated and related in meaningful ways, by both the students and teachers, resulting in reinforcement and a deeper understanding of essential skills and knowledge.

Collegial planning and the sharing of content and strategies among Art and Music teachers, Reading Specialists, and Math Coaches enriches students' classroom learning experiences. At Whitemarsh Elementary, specific attention has been given to developing a metacognitive environment that encourages visible thinking. Teachers deliberately model thinking behaviors and the application of knowledge in order to assist students in becoming aware of their own thinking. This can be seen in the Arts where teachers focus student attention on how tasks are accomplished. Process goals, in addition to content goals, are established and evaluated with students so they discover that understanding and transferring thinking processes improves learning.

The challenge of teaching all subjects is to help students develop skills which will not become obsolete; strategies that are essential for the twenty-first century. In the Arts, specialists capitalize on their talents as well as access a wealth of resources to excite and motivate students to learn. Students make connections between Art and Music concepts and other content areas, increasing the meaningfulness of their classroom learning. They create, problem-solve and build a sense of a community of learners working together in an environment which fosters the development of good thinkers who are well-rounded, lifelong learners.

5. Instructional Methods:

Whitemarsh teachers are skilled in identifying concepts and strategies students already know, what they need to learn, and how to promote individual student growth. As a data driven school, we consistently administer pre-assessments to identify strengths and needs to inform instruction. Formative assessments are utilized throughout a unit to ensure skill deficits are identified immediately. Information guides teachers in forming flexible groups, targeting specific instruction, and differentiating curricular plans based on student needs. This is accomplished by using quick checks such as: CPS clickers (classroom performance system using technology) exit tickets, anecdotal notes, student discourse, written responses, rubrics, flip videotaping, self-assessments, graphic organizers, every pupil response techniques (EPRT), color coding text using highlighters, and educational web based games. Finally, summative assessments, such as reading, writing and math benchmarks are administered at the conclusion of our units of study. Student scores are imported into our Performance Tracker (online data database) to review, analyze and reflect to make informed decisions about the students' mastery of the skills taught. This allows us to provide for additional differentiation to guarantee student success. Teachers are then able to monitor and compare aggregate groups, students within a grade level and across the district to track trends and monitor student progress. This academic approach with technological integration ensures us high levels of student learning, successful differentiation, and achievement throughout Whitemarsh.

Differentiation has become second nature at Whitemarsh. Teachers consistently adapt daily lessons to meet the diverse academic needs of students in a variety of ways. Differentiated homework is assigned through a "calendar", "choice reading response log", or "menu" for self selecting assignments. Tiered activities and flexible grouping are used for both remediation and enrichment. Guided reading groups are developed to teach skills and strategies at students' instructional levels. Special education teachers provide support in the general education classroom to diagnose specific skill weaknesses and provide immediate scaffolding strategies to aid students' learning through a comprehensive co-teaching model. Teachers collaboratively plan with the technology and library media specialist teacher to authentically integrate technology into their instructional program through the use of meaningful projects and activities.

Whitemarsh provides and differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all students. Our fluid and flexible approach of modifying and supplementing instruction ensures our success in attaining high levels of student learning and achievement for all.

6. Professional Development:

Teacher professional development is valued at both the district- and building-level in Colonial School District. The organization's student achievement goals are grounded in research-based instructional practices that include: differentiated instruction, questioning and discourse, and the integration of 21st Century skills.

Whitemarsh Elementary teachers have facilitated and participated in district-wide professional development designed to increase student attainment of the academic standards in Math and Language Arts. Teachers have deepened their understanding of essential Mathematics content and skills and how it relates to student performance on local and state assessments. As a result of ongoing professional development and collaborative efforts, Whitemarsh teachers flexibly group students across classrooms to best respond to students' specific learning needs. Teachers also learn about and share strategies to promote student discourse in Mathematics, make meaning and apply a variety of problem-solving approaches with open-ended questions. In Language Arts, new strategies for enhancing students' oral and written communication and collaboration skills have also been explored in study groups. Through the use of technology, teachers employed discussion boards to enhance vocabulary instruction and help strengthen students' comprehension skills. Additionally, Whitemarsh Elementary ensures all students succeed by their commitment to early intervention and support. Students as young as Kindergarten are identified, through classroom and local assessment data, to receive strategic, supplemental instruction in

Math and Language Arts. Professional development on early literacy and number sense has played a key role in developing teachers' ability to support and remediate students as soon as a deficit in learning becomes apparent.

This professional learning is sustained through the implementation of professional learning communities. Whitmarsh's Professional Learning Time (PLT) is a 45-minute block of time provided by the district that allows teams of teachers to meet and collaborate on ways to effectively carry out focused plans for improving student success. Each professional learning team creates a unique plan to maximize this time which includes identifying learning needs, developing an action plan, collecting evidence of student achievement and analyzing data.

7. School Leadership:

Leadership at Whitmarsh Elementary begins with the principal. The administrative style is one of empowerment. Teachers are supported and confident in their ability to reflect on practice and modify instruction so that each child is able to reach their full potential. Teachers then empower their students to take responsibility for, and actively engage in, the learning process. Partnerships with staff and families promote strong community connections. Safety of our staff and students is paramount.

At Whitmarsh, the principal serves as the instructional leader improving and sustaining student achievement through effective teacher supervision and evaluation. Each teacher is formally evaluated annually based on lesson observations. Teachers are rated in four categories including personality, preparation, technique, and pupil reaction. Informal teacher observations, anecdotal notes, and classroom walk-throughs occur daily from the principal.

Teacher leadership is cultivated at Whitmarsh. Collaborative leadership is essential for student success. Building leadership begins with our School Improvement Team (SIT) led by the principal and includes a group of approximately 12 teachers. This team develops school-wide goals and a plan for the continuous improvement of student achievement. Progress and updates are reported at each staff meeting to review, reflect, and monitor implementation of the plan. The School Improvement Team is the foundation for ongoing and sustained improvement at Whitmarsh.

A culture of innovation exists where teachers feel safe to take risks and are empowered to take on additional leadership roles throughout the building. Faculty meetings serve as a forum for teacher leaders to share best practices, examine data and initiate and facilitate topics for further study. The school counselor contributes to student success as the leader of our student support team, which meets weekly to provide support to teachers and their students. Additionally, the math coach and reading specialists develop and lead many programs, initiatives and professional development based on the needs of the students and their families. Furthermore, study groups are facilitated by teacher leaders for continuous improvement in content areas and to build collegiality among staff. Finally, Master Teachers provide leadership roles within the building, at the district level, and at state conferences.

Our common practice of shared leadership has significantly impacted student achievement and success. This cohesive leadership model has provided us the unique opportunity to enhance the Colonial School District's goal of "Promoting a Culture of Collaboration, Innovation, and Inspiration" and in turn, the community has embraced us.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: yearly

Publisher: Pa Dept of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	99	98	99	96	97
Advanced	95	91	83	90	81
Number of students tested	99	119	104	92	113
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	4	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	4	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	7	3	6	8
2. African American Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	3	3	2	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked			Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked			Masked
Number of students tested	1	2			1
4. Special Education Students					
% At or Above Proficient	93	96	100	73	83
Advanced	79	91	70	64	61
Number of students tested	14	23	23	11	18
5. English Language Learner Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked		Masked		Masked
Advanced	Masked		Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	1		2		2
6. White					
% At or Above Proficient	99	99	99	97	97
Advanced	96	92	83	91	81
Number of students tested	90	106	92	86	103
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Alternatively assessed students were Life Skills students.					

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STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: PSSA

Edition/Publication Year: yearly

Publisher: Pa Dept of Education

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Proficient	98	100	95	97	95
Advanced	65	62	66	71	53
Number of students tested	99	119	104	92	113
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	4	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	4	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	7	3	6	8
2. African American Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	3	3	2	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked	Masked			Masked
Advanced	Masked	Masked			Masked
Number of students tested	1	2			1
4. Special Education Students					
% At or Above Proficient	86	100	87	91	83
Advanced	36	57	65	36	44
Number of students tested	14	23	23	11	18
5. English Language Learner Students					
% At or Above Proficient	Masked		Masked		Masked
Advanced	Masked		Masked		Masked
Number of students tested	1		2		2
6. White					
% At or Above Proficient	98	100	97	98	94
Advanced	67	64	71	70	53
Number of students tested	90	106	92	86	103
NOTES: Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested. Alternatively assessed students were Life Skills students.					

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